

Focus on Alignment: Dispositions T-Shirts

This activity was a favorite among Studio fellows during the summer of 2009. It can prompt individual visioning work and illuminate the process of alignment for community members. Dispositions t-shirts serve as an expression of each writer's vision, unique perspectives, and talents. When we wear them at the same time, we are able to "see" our Studio vision weaving a common thread between us. This personifies the concept of alignment. I would like to thank WNY Young Writers' Studio fellow and intern, Alyssa Frey, for inspiring us to create "Sharpie shirts" just like hers.



Materials Required:

___A plain white t-shirt for every writer

___Permanent markers (we used Sharpie brand markers)

___Access to quotes, doodles, and design templates (see Recommended Reading and Resources)

___1 copy of the community/classroom vision statement

for each writer

Samples of t-shirts designed by fellows of the WNY Young Writers' Studio are available online at <http://tinyurl.com/yccnw2e>

Assessing to Learn:

This activity provides the opportunity to formatively assess the unique vision of each writer and to pinpoint where individual vision aligns with the vision of the community as a whole. Critical conversation, collaboration, and decision-making can emerge from this.

Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Invite writers to reflect on the vision that they have created for the writer they hope to be and the work that they would like to produce. If they haven't created such a vision, they will need to begin here.
2. Provide writers with resources that will enable them to find quotes, images, doodles, and designs that reflect various dimensions of their vision.
3. Encourage them to sketch out a plan for their t-shirt on paper first, and then transfer their work to their t-shirts, using permanent markers.
4. Community members may wear their t-shirts on the same day as a means of introducing themselves and their visions to the group.
5. Writers can then be invited to study the t-shirts worn by their fellow colleagues and the community vision statements provided. They may journal, dialogue, or otherwise define how alignment presents itself within the community and where better alignment can be facilitated.

Re-Tooling This Approach on the Web

- Rather than designing t-shirts, writers could opt to design Glogster posters that reveal their individual visions. They might also consider embedding links, video, images, and other artifacts that demonstrate who they would like to be as a writer and what kinds of writing they would like to produce. The community or classroom vision could also be reflected using this tool, and links could be established in order reveal alignment between personal and community/classroom visions.
- Writers could also choose to share their vision on the About or Home page of a blog and devote a portion of the content that followed to their exploration of alignment.
- Elementary students might be less overwhelmed by using Wordle to demonstrate vision. The classroom/community vision could be "Wordled" as well, and a guided comparison could be made.

